

**Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and the future of Nuclear Weapons: Is Zero Possible**

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**Rep. Ellen O. Tauscher**

First allow me to thank Foreign Minister Steinmeier and our German friends for hosting this critical international gathering of world leaders.

I have participated in the Munich Security Conference nearly every year since I was elected to the US Congress.

But this is the first time I have been able to address so many of the key decision makers in one room on a topic I have long worked on.

It is a great honor to be here to speak with friends like Bernard Kouchner.

Your country and the European Union's recent contribution to the international fuel bank is an important step toward helping secure the nuclear fuel cycle at a time of growing energy demand.

I am pleased that you are hearing from Mohamed El Baradei, Director General of the International

Atomic Energy Agency, whom I visited with in Vienna very recently.

I am also deeply encouraged to be here with Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov. As you know, I recently visited Russia and had the opportunity to consider the range of issues that we simply must work together on whether it be extending the START treaty or drastically reducing our nuclear arsenals.

As many of you may know, I am the chair of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

In that capacity I have oversight over the US budget for our nuclear complex as well as our missile defense programs.

I have long called for a new debate on the role of nuclear weapons and the need for a new defense strategy for the United States.

This is why I created a Strategic Posture Commission headed by former Secretaries Bill Perry and Jim Schlesinger.

We all here understand that reducing the size of our global nuclear arsenal is an important challenge.

President Obama and the American people are ready to work with the international community in a cooperative way.

I met with him two days ago at the White House and we discussed our significant commitment to making future generations safe from the horrors of nuclear war.

A world without nuclear weapons is no longer a dream held by only a few but is now the ambition of the world.

It is an ambition rooted in the reality that people and the governments that represent them are asking new questions about nuclear weapons.

In my role as chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee and as a chairman of the US-NATO Parliamentary delegation, I have long advocate closer cooperation on both sides of the Atlantic on

combating the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

All of us understand that the support of the peoples and parliaments of all of our nations for nonproliferation policies is vital to succeed.

Recently, both the French and British governments have undertaken fresh reviews of the need for nuclear weapons as part of their defensive capabilities.

In the United States we just completed an historic Presidential election in which the public made clear the old way of thinking was no longer adequate to meet the challenges we face.

And the new thinking our country wants and our international partners want is what I'd like to discuss today.

President Obama and I share a common bold agenda on nonproliferation.

He wants to work toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. He wants to repair the badly damaged

international arms control regime. And he wants to ensure that nuclear materials around the world are safe from theft or misuse.

The U.S. would, without question, be more secure in a world free of nuclear weapons. The real question is whether pursuit of such a goal is in our security interests. I believe it is.

The debate is therefore not how nuclear powers can position themselves in a world indefinitely held captive by nuclear weapons, but how we here can lead the world in a realistic effort to eliminate them.

So what can we do in the coming year to achieve this?

From the American side, I know that working with President Obama, there are several steps we should take this year.

The most immediate is a new commitment by the United States to lead negotiations toward a fissile material cutoff treaty.

This isn't a nice-to-have, it's a have-to-have.

We agreed to this commitment at the 2000 Non Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

Under the treaty, production of fissile material would end and all enrichment and reprocessing facilities in nuclear weapons states would be subject to international verification.

Following through on this agreement would make it easier to manage the nuclear fuel cycle and reduce the risk of theft of nuclear material.

Second, we must establish clear and enforceable penalties for withdrawal from the Nonproliferation Treaty.

It took three years for the international community to condemn North Korea after it withdrew from the NPT in 2003.

Instead of being allowed to act with impunity, I recommend that the Security Council prospectively adopt a resolution under chapter seven that states that if a nuclear power, after being found by the IAEA to be in noncompliance with its safeguard

commitments, withdraws from the NPT, such a withdrawal would then automatically trigger sanctions.

Third, the U.S. should immediately ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

This treaty is in the interests of the United States and would help control the emergence of new nuclear weapons programs.

Next, the U.S. needs to engage in immediate and unconditional direct negotiations with North Korea and Iran.

I appreciate that Mr. Larjani is here and while we have significant differences, it is in the interest of both our countries to reduce the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

Finally, the A.Q. Khan nuclear black market network proves how ineffective current export control regimes are at controlling proliferation of nuclear parts and technology.

It is long past due for our Pakistani friends to give us full access to A.Q. Khan so the world may gain a complete understanding of the damage he caused.

We can also demonstrate to the world that we are not expanding our own nuclear capability by passing laws that say just that.

From 1994 to 2004, we had a law in the United States, “Spratt-Furse,” which prohibited research and development of so-called mini-nukes. It was important because of the message it sent to the world that the United States was not looking for new applications for nuclear weapons.

I will work to develop a new ban on development of low yield nuclear weapons. It is important we send an unmistakable signal to the world that we seek no new nuclear capabilities.

The coming year also provides an opportunity to expand our nuclear reduction efforts in concert with Russia. This is another area in which President Obama is committed to acting.



For years we competed with one another, expanding the size and scope of our nuclear arsenals.

But we have made great progress, working together under the START and Moscow treaties to greatly reduce our nuclear weapons.

However START, the verification program at the foundation of our disarmament agenda, expires in December of this year.

We have nine months to establish a successor to START. One that builds on its successes but addresses its shortcomings.

Recently I led a Congressional delegation to meet with Russian officials. Our conversations were productive and they were eager to find common ground.

I have and will continue to meet with policy makers around the world, as will our new President and his administration.

But beyond the policies, and perhaps even more important, is how we communicate the importance of arms control.

In a world driven by fear, it may not always be apparent to the people you are trying to convince that producing fewer weapons, engaging in smart diplomacy, and employing all the tools in our toolbox are a better alternative.

After eight long years it should be abundantly clear that bellicose chest thumping doesn't get results.

What is required is a constant, deliberate effort to contain and reduce the number of weapons in the world.

Before the next NPT Review conference in 2010, we must take a fresh look at our arms control toolkit. The ever-present threats around the globe mean the clock is ticking.

The United States will play a leadership role in reducing the threat of nuclear weapons.

Our new Administration with President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton are leading the way.

I look forward to hearing from you on the range of areas where we can work together.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and thank you for your leadership.